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The Influence of Religion on Marriage Ages in Albania around 1900

Siegfried Gruber[*]

Abstract: *»Der Einfluss von Religion auf das Heiratsalter in Albanien um 1900«.* At first an overview about marriage patterns in Albania around 1900 and the influence of religion on marriage patterns in Southeastern Europe is given. The Albanian census of 1918 used for this analysis is presented and the religious situation in Albanian in 1918 is explained. Research questions are defined and possible other factors influencing marriage patterns in Albania are discussed. The descriptive analysis reveals religious influences on marriage patterns, but cannot quantify the amount of different factors. This first analysis of the influence of religion on marriage ages in Albania using microdata in a logistic regression shows that a considerable influence of religion on marriage ages remain even after including a series of other variables. Generally other variables like the regions within Albania, literacy, Slavic ethnicity, and age had stronger influences on ages at marriage than religion. But religion in the form of Roman Catholicism was the main factor influencing the share of unmarried women around an age of 50 years.

Keywords: Albania, marriage age, religion.

1. Introduction

1.1 Marriage Patterns in Albania

We know already quite a lot about marriage patterns in Albania around 1900 because of earlier research. In Albania at the start of the 20th century, the average age at marriage was 18.1 years among women, and 26.6 years among men according to the census of 1918 (SMAM: singulate mean age at marriage, see Hajnal 1953). This resulted in a considerable age difference between the spouses, which averaged 8.5 years, and supported male domination (Gruber 2012, 104). The male age at marriage is higher than postulated for the "Eastern European marriage pattern" (Hajnal 1965, 101). Considerable differences can be seen for the age at marriage, which ranged from 16.3 years (district of Kavaja) to 20.7 years (district of Gora) for women and from 20.9 years (district of

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Kavaja) to 33.4 years (city of Shkodra) for men. Accordingly, the age differences between husband and wife were between a low of 4.0 years (district of Durrësi) and a high of 13.5 years (city of Shkodra). In general urban people married later than rural people of the surrounding district and Northern Albanian women married on average earlier than women of Central Albania. Marriage was almost universal: in the age group 48-52 years, only 2.1 percent of the women and 4.3 percent of the men were still unmarried (Gruber 2012, 105).

In the Southern Albanian region of Mallakastër, 4.2 percent of married men were married to more than one wife (Nicholson 2006, 48). Overall in 1918 we find 4.4 percent of all married men living with more than one spouse. The lowest proportion was in the city of Shkodra (0.3 percent), while the highest was in the district of Elbasani North (8.0 percent). In general urban men were less polygamous than rural men and polygamy was most widespread in the eastern regions (Gruber 2012, 106).

The customary law known as "The Code of Lekë Dukagjin" forbade marriages of blood relatives or with fictive kin related through godfathers or blood brothers (Elsie 2001, 63); and therefore required exogamy. Exogamy was much more strictly practised in the areas of Northern Albania and in the region of Labëria (Southern Albania), where the Canon of Labëria was adhered to; while in other Southern and South-eastern regions, marriage patterns were more flexible (Dojaka 1974, 43-57).

The data of the 1918 population census indicate that 91.5 percent of all married or widowed men in this area were born in the place of residence at the time of the census, while only 29.0 percent of all married or widowed women were also born there. We can clearly see the effect of patrilocal residence in these figures. Of all married women, 25.5 percent were born locally and were married to a local man, 67.2 percent were born in another village and were married to a local man, 1.3 percent of them were locally born and were married to a man from another village, and 6.1 percent came to this village together with their husband. Indications of matrilocal residence never exceed 5 percent of all married couples (Gruber 2010, 414). Finally, we can draw a rough picture of predominantly exogamous marriages in the north of Northern Albania, predominantly marriages within the same village in the south-west of this region, and high rates of endogamous marriages in the south and east of this region (Gruber 2006, 9).

Marriage barriers between different religious groups were often more pronounced than those between different ethnic groups in previous centuries. There were almost no religious intermarriages recorded in the Albanian census of 1918: only 0.1 percent of Christians and 0.02 percent of Muslims reported being married to a spouse of another confession (Gruber 2014, 236). But there are ethnographic reports from Northern Albania about Christian-Muslim intermarriages. The Muslim *fis* (Albanian term for descent group or tribe) of Krasniqi and Gashi sometimes married Catholic women from Merturi. However,

this custom had almost vanished at the beginning of the 20th century (Liebert 1909, 11). In Lurja, intermarriage of Christians and Muslims was reportedly quite common (Whitaker 1968, 275), while Durham noted that members of the Lurja *fis* married mostly Mirdites, as long as they were Christians. As Muslims, they preferred marrying people from Matja and the Dibra region (Durham 1928, 30f.).

The place of birth allows us to reconstruct the religious confession of wives before marriage. In the Velja *fis* (part of Zhuba), which was 100 percent Catholic, 10 percent of the spouses were born in Matja, which was 100 percent Muslim. In Kastrati, half of the Catholic men were married to women from Matja and Grizha, both Muslim *fis* (Gruber 2010, 420f.). An in-depth analysis revealed that there were major differences within Albania concerning marriages across religious boundaries. The highest proportions were found in Northern Albania, among the wives of husbands engaged in a production job, the youngest age cohort, Catholics, Roma, people born or living in a religiously heterogeneous environment, and especially among those women who migrated to another prefecture. Urban people had higher rates than rural people and literate people had higher rates than illiterate people (Gruber 2014, 249).

1.2 The Influence of Religion on Marriage

June L. Sklar argued that Protestantism and Roman Catholicism reinforced the late-marriage pattern through doctrines and practices that emphasised the social and economic independence of the nuclear family unit from the extended kin group and weakened the moral authority of such large kin groups (Sklar 1974, 236; Sklar 1970, 145-61). By contrast, Islam "favoured an early-marriage pattern in the Balkans because it tended to reinforce the moral authority of extended kin ties and encourage the attachment of the nuclear unit to the ramified kinship group" (Sklar 1974, 237). The Roman Catholic Church had an elaborated administration while the Orthodox churches were organisationally weaker, and Islam had neither a separate nor a celibate clergy. So there is a highly valued celibate life available which can compete with the status of being married. Islam on the other side facilitates early marriage because parents choose marriage partners and are anxious for their daughters to marry young, so that no doubt about their pre-marital chastity could be raised (Sklar 1974, 237f.). Karl Kaser denies the influence of religion on early marriage, because also Catholics married early (Kaser 1995, 133). Ulf Brunnbauer in contrast writes that Muslims married earlier than Orthodox Christians in the Bulgarian Rhodope mountains around 1900 (Brunnbauer 2004, 348-59), which is confirmed for women by Nikolai Botev for the time period 1901-1925 (Botev 1990, 117). The proportions of people never marrying were almost the same because marriage was almost universal for both Christians and Muslims (Brunnbauer 2004, 356-8). Maria Todorova reveals a major difference in ages at marriage between

much lower ages for the rural Bulgarian population compared to the urban one. Urban Muslims and Christians did not differ much concerning their ages at marriage (Todorova 1993, 40f.).

A comparison of the influence of Western Christianity, Eastern Christianity, and Islam on marriage patterns is hindered by the fact that they were mostly separated in historical times so that other factors like ethnicity or regional/cultural patterns cannot be distinguished from the effects of religion. So we would need a country or region with three religious confessions living quite near to each other, so that we can minimize regional effects. Albania is a good case to investigate the historic influence of religion on marriage behaviour in Southeastern Europe, because it is the only country in the region (besides Bosnia-Hercegovina) where three large confessional groups coexisted: Muslims, Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox Christians. Unfortunately the sources for such a research are very limited before 1945, because a registration of marriages by the state was only introduced in the 1920s and the number of marriages have been published only since 1923 (with gaps), but ages at marriage only since 1960 (Rothenbacher 2013, 168; 221). An earlier registration of marriages by church authorities does exist for both Christian denominations, but not for Muslims. In such an absence of data on ages at marriage only indirect measures based on census data can be used. The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (Hajnal 1953) is such a measure and all information about ages at marriage in this article refer to this measure.

The influence of the religious affiliation on the age at marriage in Albania has already been partly investigated: in Tirana Muslim men and women married earlier than Christians according to the censuses of 1918 and 1930 (Kera 2012, 46). The proportions of men still unmarried at an age of 45-49 years was much higher among Catholic men than among Muslim men (Kera 2012, 47). Overall the age at marriage was lowest for Catholics and highest for Orthodox Christians, but among the urban population Catholics married at the highest ages (Papa-Pandelejmoni 2012, 58). The proportions of people with life-long celibacy was highest among urban Catholics, while among the rural population only Catholic women had the highest proportion. One of the reasons for these high proportions among Catholics were unmarried priests and nuns (Papa-Pandelejmoni 2012, 59).

2. The Census of 1918

In the absence of available vital registration data, a pertinent source for this kind of research is the population census conducted by the Austro-Hungarian army in 1918 in Albania (see Nicholson 1999). This census is the first for Albania (although not covering the whole territory of present-day Albania) in which the original data is still available on the level of the persons recorded,

and it is of high quality given the circumstances under which it was taken (Gruber 2007, 257). It is still widely unknown, and thus in a demographic atlas of Albania data from 1926 is considered the earliest population data (Bërxholi 2003). Gjonça mentions only the preliminary census of 1916, and gives the credit for the first general census conducted in Albania to the 1923 census (Gjonça 2001, 38f.). Earlier Ottoman censuses have obviously not counted the complete Albanian population or reported wrong religious affiliations of the population. Muslims accounted for 90 to 97 percent of the population of the administrative district of Shkodra in the years 1894 and 1906/7 (Karpat 1985, 155; 168f.) - so the Catholics of Northern Albania are either missing or counted as Muslims.

The Austro-Hungarian army occupied the majority of the territory of the newly created independent Albanian state (except its southern parts), and established a new administration in 1916. Officers of the Austro-Hungarian army collected the census data with the assistance of Albanian officers (Seiner 1922, 3). The census-takers were instructed to make sure that no persons were excluded from the count, such as female children (Seiner 1922, 4). These efforts appear to have been successful, since the census counted almost the same number of men and women, whereas in censuses of other countries in the region, there was always a clear male majority in the population (for Serbia see Sundhaussen 1989, 80).

The research project, "The 1918 Albanian Population Census: Data Entry and Basic Analyses," based at the University of Graz and funded by the Austrian Science Fund (2000-2003), sought to convert the data into machine-readable form.[1] The data remains on the individual level, which allows for much more research than aggregate data on the village level. The researcher is able to aggregate data as s/he wishes, and is not bound to the categories of already aggregated data (Hall, McCaa, and Thorvaldsen 2000, 9). This also enables the researcher to combine different variables on the individual level for research purposes. The census data of 1918 is a rich source for a variety of questions related to studies about population structure and behaviour. Age, birth place and the place of residence were registered for each person, and therefore data for marriage patterns is available. Up to now, the data of 309 villages and cities have been entered in a database, which contains 140,611 persons.[2] The data is a sample and therefore it has to be weighted to represent the population of the prefectures, which have been used as sampling strata.[3]

[1] <http://www-gewi.uni-graz.at/suedost/seiner/index.html> (Accessed May 15, 2017).
[2] <http://www-gewi.uni-graz.at/suedost/seiner/availability.html> (Accessed May 15, 2017).
[3] More information about sampling can be found in Gruber 2012, 103.

Table 1: Data Used for Analysis

	Population	Weighted Population
Muslim	107,311	335,607
Catholic	19,612	89,603
Orthodox	13,633	14,173
Other	55	125
sum	140,611	439,508

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.

3. Religion in Albania

Albania was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire during the latter's expansion in Europe beginning in the late Middle Ages. Albanians became the nation with the highest percentage of Muslims within the European part of the Ottoman Empire, and people of Albanian descent were successful in making a career within the military and civil administration of the Ottoman Empire. Albanian independence occurred only with the final collapse of Ottoman rule in Europe (with the exception of the region around Istanbul). The country's neighbouring states wanted to partition the Albanian territories among them, so independence was declared in 1912, but the new Albanian state was smaller than the region settled by Albanians.

The dominant religion in Albania in 1918 was Islam with about three quarters of the population, while Catholic and Orthodox Christians together accounted for about a quarter of the population. Orthodox Christians are underrepresented in the census database because more than half of the Orthodox Christians lived in the four districts where the data was destroyed. Only the aggregate data of the preliminary census of 1916 is available for three of them and for the district of Shkrapari only an estimation of the population exists. In addition a major part of the Orthodox Albanians lived outside the area of the Albanian population census of 1918. The destruction of some of the census material makes the Orthodox population also the most urbanised religious group in the census database.

Table 2: Religion in Albania in 1918 in Percentages

	Muslim	Catholic	Orthodox	Other
Census Database	76.4	20.4	3.2	0.02
Published Results	74.8	17.1	8.1	0.004
City dwellers within religious group in census database	13.2	8.5	42.7	32.6

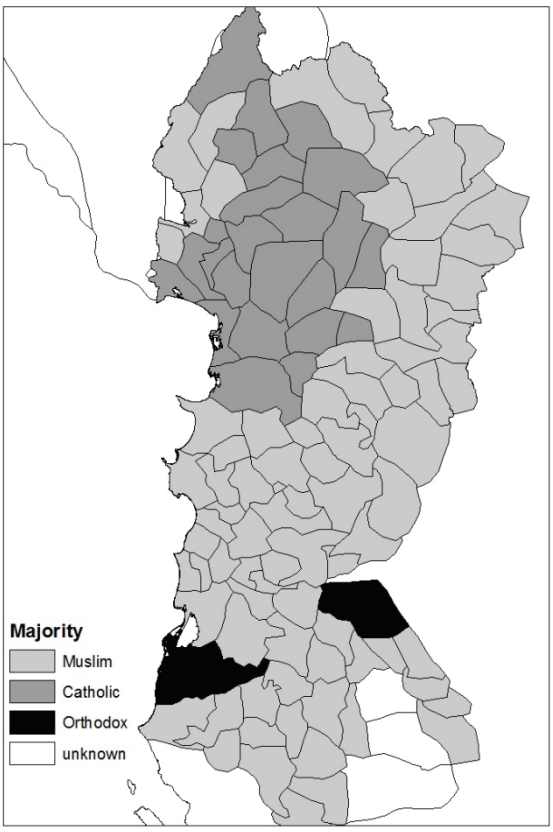
Source: Seiner 1922, 10; Kaser et al. 2011.

These religious groups were not evenly distributed within Albania: Catholics were concentrated in the Northwest, while Orthodox Christians dominated in

the Southwest and were also numerous in some cities outside this area. Muslims were the major religion everywhere else (see Fig. 1). About one percent of the population declared themselves as Bektashi, a deviant Muslim group (see e.g. Clayer 2012). They were especially numerous in the districts of Malakastra and Elbasani North.

Religious majorities in settlements were generally clear: more than 90 percent of settlements were dominated by a proportion of at least 75 percent of one religious group. Settlements with inhabitants of only one religion made up 71.7 percent of all settlements and more than half of the population (53.9 percent). A major divide in residence areas within Shkodra, the largest city in the area covered by the census of 1918, can be observed according to religious affiliation: Catholics lived almost exclusively in the east of the city, while the other city quarters were almost entirely Muslim (Gruber 2006, 153). Such a sharp segregation has already been observed earlier (Ippen 1907, 39).

Figure 1: Majority Religion in Albania 1918



4. Research Questions

This paper will focus on the effect of religion on several aspects of marriage patterns:

- male age at first marriage
- female age at first marriage
- age difference of spouses
- male proportions of never married
- female proportions of never married

Ages at marriage (or alternatively proportions of married/unmarried people in different age groups) have been widely used as a major indicator of marriage patterns. The available source, the census of 1918, allows to investigate only first marriages, because generally it does not indicate remarriages. So we can do research only about the passage from being unmarried to being married. The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (Hajnal 1953) will be used as a measure, which indicates the average number of years a person has to wait before getting married for the first time. It is a group measure and cannot be applied to individual persons.

Age differences of spouses cannot be investigated for remarried couples separately, because of the same reason. We are bound to use the data for all couples, we can only exclude second, third, and fourth wives of polygamous husbands. The proportion of people who never married has been used by John Hajnal to distinguish between Western and Eastern European marriage patterns. The Western European pattern is characterised by high proportions of never married persons, while in the Eastern European pattern almost everybody marries. He used the proportions single in the age group 45-49 years for his analyses (Hajnal 1965). The information on ages in the census of 1918 display a strong tendency towards rounding in final digits of 0 and 5 and therefore we use the age group 48-52 years to minimize the effects of such rounding of ages. A comparative analysis of 266 historical European regions shows that among the top five regions with the highest tendency of age rounding (or heaping) two Albanian regions are included and among the top 15 regions there are six Albanian regions.

In addition to religion we shall check whether other factors might influence marriage patterns even more than religious affiliation. The following variables will be used in this check:

- urban/rural residence
- literacy/illiteracy
- ethnicity
- tribal organisation
- occupational groups
- regions and cities within Albania

It is generally accepted that urban and rural people behave differently concerning marriage and also for Albania is has been shown that city dwellers married later than people residing in the countryside (Gruber 2012, 105). The urban population accounted for only 12 percent of the population according to the census of 1918 (Seiner 1922, 6). Literacy is also known to have an effect on marriage behaviour: literate men and women married on average several years later than their illiterate counterparts (Gruber 2012, 105). In Albania in 1918 overall literacy levels were quite low: only 2.5 percent of the men and 0.1 percent of women were literate in the rural areas. In the six cities with available data (for Berat the data has not been preserved) Shkodra and Durrës had the highest literacy rates with about 40 percent for men and 10 percent for women, while for the other cities the shares were between 10 and 20 percent for men and 0.6 and 1.6 percent for women. Catholics had the by far highest literacy rates among the city dwellers with 65 respectively 32 percent, while Muslims had the lowest.

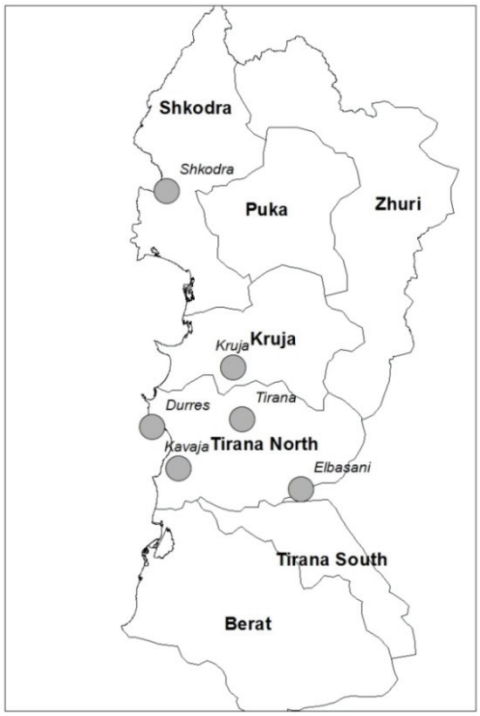
Ethnicity could play some role in shaping different marriage patterns, but in Albania the proportion of ethnic minorities was quite small: only 4.4 percent of the population in the census database were not Albanian, two thirds of them Slavic and one third Roma. Slavic people were concentrated in the northeast of the country in the Gora region and near Shkodra at the Montenegrin border, while Roma were mostly urban people.

In the north of Albania a tribal organisation was still preserved in the beginning of the 20th century and attracted quite a lot of researchers because of its alleged or real "otherness" from the rest of Europe (e.g. blood-feuds). Such a region could have been culturally different from the central or southern part of Albania. The published results of the Albanian census of 1918 contain also a description of the tribal areas and information about the villages belonging to the different "tribes" (Seiner 1922, 101-16). This information has been used to divide the population into the "tribal area" and the "non-tribal area". Another possible division between Albania would be between the two dialectal groups of Ghegs in the North and Tosks in the South. This dividing line has not been used, because it would partly reproduce the difference between the "tribal area" and the "non-tribal area".

Another important structural component concerns the occupational groups within the population. The most important division is between agricultural and non-agricultural occupations, but also other divisions like between white and blue colour jobs are important. Finally even smaller occupational sectors could be analysed separately. The occupational coding is based upon the Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations (HISCO, van Leeuwen, Maas, Miles 2002). A large proportion of the population (almost half of the male population and two thirds of the female population) has no occupational title recorded in the census and therefore these people have been assigned the occupational group of the household head.

The final division will be the one between the administrative divisions of rural Albania at that time (seven prefectures) and the six cities. A profile of the six cities with available microdata (religion, ethnicity, literacy, age structure, and occupational groups) has already been published (Gruber 2008, 142f.).

Figure 2: Prefectures and Cities in Albania in 1918



5. Descriptive Analysis

5.1 Age at Marriage

The overall Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) was 26.6 years for men and there was no difference between Muslims and Catholics (considering the amount of age-heaping in the data). Orthodox men married on average almost 3 years later. Urban men married on average about 4 years later than rural men, while literate men married on average 5 years later than illiterate men. Slavic men married about one year later than Albanian men and Roma men married about 4 years earlier than Albanian men. Interestingly enough there was no difference between the tribal area and the non-tribal area concerning the male

age at marriage. Men engaged in the agricultural sector married at the youngest ages, while men engaged in white colour jobs, trade, and services married on average several years later than men in the agricultural sector. The regional differences made up more than 4 years between the lowest and the highest male ages at marriage for rural men, while the difference was almost 7 years between the lowest and the highest male ages at marriage in the six Albanian cities of this analysis. So from a first rough analysis we can conclude that religion had an effect on the male age at marriage, but that other factors had the same or even more effects on the male age at marriage.

Table 3: Age at Marriage

	Male		Female	
	SMAM	N (unweighted)	SMAM	N (unweighted)
overall	26.6	71,135	18.0	69,463
Muslim	26.5	54,416	18.1	52,889
Catholic	26.3	9,901	17.2	9,710
Orthodox	29.2	6,786	19.9	6,845
urban	30.1	29,227	19.1	28,736
rural	26.1	41,908	17.8	40,727
literate	31.2	9,412	20.6	2,042
illiterate	26.2	61,709	17.9	67,420
Slavic	27.8	6,683	19.8	5,835
Roma	22.7	1,747	18.0	1,892
tribal area	26.7	10,916	17.4	9,861
non-tribal area	26.5	60,219	18.3	59,602
white-collar workers	29.0	3,089	19.9	3,089
sales workers	30.4	6,744	18.8	6,723
service workers	30.0	4,238	19.5	3,710
agricultural workers	25.6	29,524	17.6	29,542
production workers	28.8	14,025	18.7	12,657
others/not working	27.2	4,535	18.9	5,193
missing	26.9	8,980	18.2	8,549
rural prefectures: Kruja	25.7	2,161	16.8	2,115
Puka	25.8	2,632	16.2	2,376
Shkodra	25.6	6,252	17.4	6,088
Tirana North	23.9	7,108	18.0	7,417
Zhuri	27.8	14,367	18.3	12,496
Tirana South	28.5	5,709	20.1	6,494
Berati	25.6	3,679	18.1	3,741
cities: Kruja	28.4	1,985	19.3	1,908
Shkodra	34.0	11,979	20.0	11,610
Durrës	27.3	2,155	19.3	2,152
Elbasan	29.2	5,065	18.8	5,172
Kavaja	27.2	2,789	18.3	2,732
Tirana	27.5	5,254	18.1	5,162

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.

The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage for women was 18.0 years for the whole of the surviving area of the Albanian census of 1918. Catholic women married

about one year earlier than Muslim women and Orthodox women married about two years later than Muslim women. The difference in ages at marriage between the cities and the countryside was only about one year and therefore much less than for men. Literate women married on average about 3 years later than their illiterate counterparts, which is also less than the difference between literate and illiterate men. Slavic women married on average about 2 years later than Albanian women, while Roma women married at about the same age as Albanian women. The tribal area had an average age at marriage which was about one year lower than the one of the non-tribal area. Women in the agricultural sector married at the youngest ages and women married to husbands in the white-collar sector married at the latest, but still at 20 years. The regional differences were quite elaborated with about 4 years of difference between Puka and Tirana South, while there was only a difference of 2 years between the six cities. So we see also for women an effect of religion on the age at marriage and again other factors of a similar or even higher effect.

5.2 Age Difference of Spouses

The mean age difference between spouses in Albania in 1918 was 9.3 years and therefore very high according to European standards. There were almost no differences according to religion in this respect. One major determining factor was the age of the husband: the older the husband the larger the age difference to his wife. Men around an age of 20 years were married to wives about one year younger on average, men around an age of 45 were already 10 years older on average, and men older than 70 years were already 20 years older on average. The age differences were larger in the cities than in the countryside, which corresponded to the higher age difference between literate and illiterate husbands and their wives. Roma people had lower age differences than other groups in the population, but the average was still 7 years. There were again no differences between the tribal area and the non-tribal area. People in the agricultural sector had the lowest age differences of all occupational groups, while it was highest for couples in the trade sector. There was again a major regional effect with a difference of 4 years in the rural areas and even 8 years between the six cities. It seems that religion had only a minor effect on the age difference of spouses, while other factors were more important for this variable.

Table 4: Mean Age Difference between Spouses

characteristics of the husband	age difference in years	N (unweighted)
overall	9.3	25,778
Muslim	9.4	19,891
Catholic	8.8	3,266
Orthodox	9.5	2,614
age groups:		
18-22 years	0.9	687
23-27 years	3.1	1,383
28-32 years	4.8	2,696
33-37 years	6.9	3,286
38-42 years	8.5	4,318
43-47 years	10.0	3,157
48-52 years	11.6	3,222
53-57 years	13.2	1,901
58-62 years	14.7	2,020
63-67 years	16.9	1,029
68-72 years	16.6	922
73-77 years	19.7	300
78+ years	22.0	352
urban	11.4	10,068
rural	9.0	15,710
literate	11.9	3,379
illiterate	9.1	22,399
Slavic	9.0	2,399
Roma	7.1	650
tribal area	9.4	3,901
non-tribal area	9.2	21,877
white-collar workers	10.9	1,176
sales workers	11.9	2,705
service workers	9.2	1,125
agricultural workers	8.9	11,694
production workers	9.4	5,316
others/not working	10.3	769
missing	10.1	2,993
rural prefectures: Kruja	7.8	818
Puka	10.4	929
Shkodra	8.9	2,316
Tirana North	7.2	2,801
Zhuri	9.7	5,004
Tirana South	11.0	2,418
Berati	10.5	1,424
cities: Kruja	5.8	758
Shkodra	14.1	3,813
Durrës	9.1	787
Elbasan	12.5	1,746
Kavaja	9.0	1,067
Tirana	9.6	1,897

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.

5.3 Proportion of Never Married People

Overall the proportion of never married men in the age group of about 50 years (48 to 52 years) was only 4.6 percent and therefore we can conclude that marriage was almost universal. Differences between Muslim and Catholic men were negligible, while Orthodox men had even lower proportions. Urban and literate people had clearly higher proportions of never married men than their rural and illiterate counterparts. The lowest proportions were found among Slavic men and the highest among Roma men (at higher ages the proportions of never married Roma men reached similar low levels as for Albanian and Slavic men). In the tribal area the proportions of never married men was a bit higher than in the non-tribal area. Most occupational groups had similar proportions of never married men, but especially men in the service sector had high rates of never married men at such an age. The rural prefectures showed also a high variation with a difference of almost 5 years between Zhuri and Kruja. The difference between the cities was even more pronounced with Kavaja having no never married men at such an age and Shkodra having almost 10 percent of never married men at such an age. Once again there seems to be an effect of religon on the proportion of men having never married until an age of 50 years, but other factors seem to be of a similar or even stronger importance.

Almost all women married during their life time, only 2.5 percent were still unmarried at an age of about 50 years, which is about only half of the proportion of unmarried men in the same age group. Among Muslim and Orthodox women the proportion was even lower, while among Catholic women the share reached almost 10 percent. The share was larger among the urban population, but still lower than 4 percent. Literate women were much more likely to remain unmarried than illiterate ones. Their share was the highest calculated for any group considered here. Slavic and Roma women had also lower shares of never married women at higher ages than Albanian women. The tribal area and the non-tribal area were very similar as were most of the occupational groups, only women in the service sector (or wives of husbands in the service sector) had clearly higher proportions of never married women. The three prefectures in the north had much higher proportions than the other four prefectures where fewer than one percent of the female population at age 50 were still unmarried. Shkodra was outstanding among the cities in this respect with the by far highest rate among them, while in Kavaja or Tirana no or almost no woman was still unmarried at such an age. We see here clearly a massive effect of religion and literacy causing much higher rates of life-long celibacy among women. A first explanation would be that nuns could have an effect on these high rates, but actually at this age they accounted only for 2.5 percent of these urban unmarried women.

Table 5: Proportions of Never Married Persons at Age 50 (48-52 Years)

	Male		Female	
	Percentage	N (unweighted)	Percentage	N (unweighted)
overall	4.6	3,796	2.5	3,948
Muslim	4.6	2,872	1.0	2,995
Catholic	4.9	525	8.8	570
Orthodox	3.2	397	0.5	383
urban	6.8	1,580	3.8	1,653
rural	4.3	2,216	2.3	2,295
literate	6.3	539	16.7	42
illiterate	4.5	3,257	2.4	3,906
Slavic	1.1	364	0.7	292
Roma	8.9	85	1.3	104
tribal area	5.5	518	2.2	561
non-tribal area	4.2	3,278	2.6	3,387
white-collar workers	7.2	179	1.9	169
sales workers	4.7	436	1.6	287
service workers	12.3	177	7.5	239
agricultural workers	4.5	1,635	1.9	1,698
production workers	4.1	833	2.9	732
others/not working	6.8	118	0.7	406
missing	3.4	418	5.2	417
rural prefectures: Kruja	7.7	106	4.0	110
Puka	5.1	143	3.9	128
Shkodra	3.9	325	7.5	338
Tirana North	3.9	373	0.5	505
Zhuri	2.9	746	0.6	706
Tirana South	4.9	362	0.1	313
Berati	3.6	161	0.0	195
cities: Kruja	2.9	104	2.9	139
Shkodra	9.7	704	7.6	643
Durrës	7.8	116	2.1	97
Elbasan	7.3	286	1.9	261
Kavaja	0.0	123	0.0	181
Tirana	2.4	247	0.9	332

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.

6. Regression Analysis

It seems that other factors have the same or even more impact on marriage patterns than religion. If we take all other factors together, will there still be an effect of religion? How different will be Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians after considering other factors influencing marriage patterns? We shall try to answer these questions and at first we shall check whether these other factors are correlated with each other or with religion or not. Most of the variables are significantly correlated, but the correlations are generally very weak. The only stronger correlations are between "being urban" and "being

literate" respectively "living in the tribal area". The correlations concerning the occupational groups show some significant correlations exceeding a value 0.3. These correlations concern generally the agricultural sector which is positively correlated with the tribal area (0.36**) and negatively correlated with the urban population (-0.46**). The sales sector is positively correlated the urban population (0.37**) while the production sector is positively correlated with the Slavic ethnicity (0.31**). The rural prefectures in the north are positively correlated with being Catholic and belonging to the tribal area, while the cities are positively correlated with being urban.

Table 6: Correlations of Variables

	Catholic	Orthodox	urban	literate	Slavic	Roma	tribal area
Catholic	1						
Orthodox	-0.09**	1					
urban	-0.07**	0,16**	1				
literate	0.04**	0.08**	0.29**	1			
Slavic	-0.08**	0.08**	-0.02**	0.03**	1		
Roma	-0.06**	-0.02**	0.11*	-0.02**	-0.02**	1	
tribal area	0.20**	-0.12**	-0.26**	-0.10**	-0.12**	-0.02**	1

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.
Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Our first regressions will be about the age at marriage and we shall analyse the effects of the different variables on already being married in an age group where about half of the population was already married. The age group of 15 to 19 years has been chosen for females, because in this age group 38.1 percent of them were already married, while in the age group of 16 to 20 years age heaping on the age of 20 years could cause some distortions in the results. Reference category is the larger category within dichotomous variables and for the regional dummy variables the rural prefecture of Tirana North has been chosen, because it was about average in marriage patterns, geographically rather central, the most populated prefecture, and surrounding four out of the six cities. The occupational groups have been reduced to two, agricultural and non-agricultural, because most of the non-agricultural sectors are too small for producing significant results. The differences between religious confessions in proportions married at such an age are a bit different from the differences in table 3, because the proportions of never married people cannot be accounted for in this analysis.

In a single regression Catholic women had a 16 percent lower probability of being married at such an age as compared to Muslim women, while Orthodox women had an even 67 percent lower probability. Interestingly enough, these probabilities become the same after adding all the other variables in a multiple regression analysis. Finally a probability of 43 percent lower than for Muslim women remains for Christian women. This indicates that there existed a considerable religious influence on the age at marriage for women. Urban women

and women in the non-agricultural sector (or better with husbands in this sector) showed a much lower probability of being married, while women in the tribal area showed a much higher probability of being married in this age group. But these three variables have become insignificant after adding individual regions and cities into the model. Literacy is the strongest barrier against early marriages: literate women's probability of being married at young ages was 81 percent lower than the one of illiterate women. Similarly Slavic women had a much lower probability of being married at such an early age. The regional effect was very strong: two prefectures in the north had probabilities which were 100 percent and even more higher than the reference prefecture. These two prefectures were characterised by the tribal area. In contrast one southern prefecture had a probability of being married at this age, which was 74 percent lower than the reference prefecture. The cities of Kruja and Shkodra had probabilities lowered by 66 to 70 percent compared to the rural prefecture of Tirana North and therefore proving the influence of a different urban behaviour. The odds ratios of the other four cities are insignificant (as for one rural prefecture). Interestingly enough, all these cities are surrounded by the reference prefecture.

46.7 percent of men were already married in the age group of 23 to 27 years and therefore this age group is best qualified for the same analysis of men. In a single regression the difference between Muslim and Catholic men was quite small and not significant, while Orthodox men had a 40 percent lower probability for being married at such an age. In multiple regressions the odds ratio for Catholic men are always close to 1 and never significant, while in the final model the odds ratio for Orthodox men is 0.72, but only significant at the 0.05 level. So we cannot find a difference between Muslim and Catholic men, but between Muslim and Orthodox men (marrying later) concerning the age at marriage. Urban men had a 45 percent lower probability of being married, while literate men had only a 33 percent lower probability of being married. The effect of literacy was therefore less pronounced than for women. Slavic man had a lower probability of being married than Albanian men in a single regression, but after adding occupations and regional dummies to the model, their probability of being married was higher than for Albanian men (+ 41 percent). Roma men had the highest probability of being married in this age group with an odds ratio of 2.47. Men in the tribal area had a lower probability of being married than men in the non-tribal area (-23 percent), which is astonishing because in a single regression the difference was quite small. Men outside the agricultural sector married significantly later than men in the agricultural sector: the probability of being married around age 25 was 43 percent lower. There were again major differences between the rural prefectures, although not of such a degree as for women. The highest proportions of men being married in this age group was in the prefecture of Tirana North, the reference category. Most prefectures had proportions of being married which were

about 50 percent lower, in the prefecture of Tirana South even 66 percent lower. Similar proportions had only the prefectures of Shkodra (not significant) and Kruja (both in the north). Most cities had odds ratios which were not significant, only in Shkodra (-73 percent) and in Elbasan (-35 percent) these much lower levels of being married were significant (in Elbasan only at the 0.05 level).

So the regression analysis reveals some factors which are the same for both, men and women (e.g. literacy), some factors which are different for them (e.g. being Slavic), and some factors which are significant for men but not for women (e.g. being urban).

Table 7: Odds Ratios of Already Being Married in the Age Groups 15-19 Years (Women) and 23-27 Years (Men)

		Female		Male	
characteristic	reference category	single regression	multiple regression, final model	single regression	multiple regression, final model
Catholic	Muslim	0.84**	0.57**	0.95	0,93
Orthodox	Muslim	0.33**	0.57**	0.60**	0.72*
urban	rural	0.48**		0.41**	0.55**
literate	illiterate	0.08**	0.19**	0.31**	0.67**
Slavic	Albanian	0.30**	0.32**	0.79*	1.41**
Roma	Albanian	0.89	0.82	2.12**	2.47**
tribal area	non-tribal area	1.80**		0.88**	0.77**
non-agricultural	agricultural	0.58**		0.56**	0.57**
rural prefectures: Kruja	Tirana North	1.74**	1.96**	0.72**	0.80**
Puka	Tirana North	1.79**	2.83**	0.39**	0.50**
Shkodra	Tirana North	0.82**	1.30**	0.73**	0.99
Zhuri	Tirana North	0.83**	0.97	0.41**	0.46**
Tirana South	Tirana North	0.25**	0.26**	0.29**	0.34**
Berati	Tirana North	1.59**	1.58**	0.46**	0.51**
cities: Kruja	Tirana North	0.29**	0.30**	0.27**	0.75
Shkodra	Tirana North	0.22**	0.34**	0.08**	0.27**
Durrës	Tirana North	0.54**	0.78	0.48**	1.46
Elbasan	Tirana North	0.74**	0.84	0.25**	0.65*
Kavaja	Tirana North	1.00	1.11	0.42**	1.25
Tirana	Tirana North	0.93	1.00	0.37**	n.a.
N		4,455	4,455	3,881	3,881

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.
Note: ** Odds ratio is significant at the 0.01 level.
* Odds ratio is significant at the 0.05 level.

We shall concentrate on husband's characteristics in analysing factors influencing the age difference between spouses. We differentiate here between age differences of up to 9 years on the one hand and 10 years and more on the other hand. Overall 46.3 percent of husbands lived with a wife (or first wife) 10 or

more years younger than themselves. Christian men were similar in this respect in a single regression, but less likely to live with a wife 10 years or more younger than themselves (30 to 34 percent lower probability) after adding all the other factors. So we can see a clear influence of religion on the age difference between spouses. Nevertheless the most important factor in age difference was clearly the age of the husband: the older the husband, the higher the probability for having a much younger wife. Husbands of about 25 years had a 97 percent lower probability of having a much younger wife compared with husbands of about 40 years. In contrast the probability of husbands in their seventies was 450 percent higher than for husbands with about 40 years. Urban husbands had a considerably higher probability (+ 65 percent) to live with a much younger wife than rural husbands, as had literate husbands (+30 percent) compared to illiterate husbands. Non-Albanian husbands had lower probabilities (-30 percent), while husbands in the tribal areas had a 26 percent higher probability of living with a much younger wife. Husbands in the non-agricultural sector had a slightly higher probability being married to a much younger wife. The regional variation was also very pronounced concerning the age difference between spouses: only the prefecture of Kruja had a similar low proportion being married to a much younger wife than Tirana North. In two of the prefectures the probabilities were more than 100 percent higher than in Tirana North. Two cities (Elbasan and Shkodra) had similar high odds ratios, but the results for others were again not significant.

2.5 percent of all women in the age group 48–52 years were still unmarried. Catholic women had a probability increased by 361 percent compared to Muslim women. This makes religion a very important factor for women never marrying. In contrast the lower probability for Orthodox women is not significant. The variables of urban residence, literacy, ethnicity, and occupational sector are not significant in a multiple regression and therefore dropped from the final model. In the tribal area the probability of life-long celibacy was reduced by about a half. Once again major differences between administrative units within Albania come to the surface: in the northern prefectures probabilities of life-long celibacy were enhanced by more than 100 percent, while the lower probabilities in the southern ones are not significant. Four cities show also a similar increase in the probability of never marrying.

Table 8: Odds Ratio of Having an Age Difference between Spouses of 10 Years or More

characteristic of husband	reference category	single regression	multiple regression, final model
Catholic	Muslim	0.90**	0.70**
Orthodox	Muslim	1.08	0.66**
age groups:			
18-22 years	38-42 years	0.00	0.00
23-27 years	38-42 years	0.03**	0.03**
28-32 years	38-42 years	0.20**	0.20**
33-37 years	38-42 years	0.47**	0.47**
43-47 years	38-42 years	1.30**	1.30**
48-52 years	38-42 years	2.17**	2.19**
53-57 years	38-42 years	2.28**	2.20**
58-62 years	38-42 years	3.50**	3.51**
63-67 years	38-42 years	3.17**	3.05**
68-72 years	38-42 years	5.24**	5.50**
73-77 years	38-42 years	6.00**	5.54**
78+ years	38-42 years	9.08**	9.51**
urban	rural	1.77**	1.65**
literate	illiterate	1.77**	1.30**
Slavic	Albanian	0.84**	0.69**
Roma	Albanian	0.65**	0.73**
tribal area	non-tribal area	1.11**	1.26**
non-agricultural	agricultural	1.27**	1.13**
rural prefectures:			
Kruja	Tirana North	1.10**	1.06
Puka	Tirana North	2.24**	2.63**
Shkodra	Tirana North	1.45**	1.83**
Zhuri	Tirana North	1.73**	1.50**
Tirana South	Tirana North	2.60**	2.28**
Berati	Tirana North	1.98**	1.86**
cities:			
Kruja	Tirana North	0.28**	0.10**
Shkodra	Tirana North	5.67**	2.41**
Durrës	Tirana North	1.57**	1.12
Elbasan	Tirana North	4.19**	2.56**
Kavaja	Tirana North	1.44**	0.84
Tirana	Tirana North	1.73**	n.a.
N		24,875	24,875

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.
Note: ** Odds ratio is significant at the 0.01 level.
* Odds ratio is significant at the 0.05 level.

4.6 percent of all men in the same age group were still unmarried and no significant influence of religion on this behaviour could be detected. Urban men had an almost twice as high probability of remaining unmarried than rural men. Slavic men had a much lower probability than Albanian men, while the results for Roma men are not significant. Men in the tribal area had a probability of remaining unmarried which was increased by about a half as compared to the

non-tribal area. This is in clear contrast to the effect of the tribal area on the proportion of never married women. The rural regions and the cities show again major differences, but most odds ratios are not significant and therefore they have been dropped from the final model.

Table 9: Odds Ratios of Being Still Unmarried in the Age Group 48-52 Years

		Female		Male	
characteristic	reference category	single regression	multiple regression, final model	single regression	multiple regression, final model
Catholic	Muslim	9.69**	4.61**	1.08	
Orthodox	Muslim	0.51	0.46	0.68	
urban	rural	1.72**		1.63**	1.90**
literate	illiterate	8.10**		1.43*	
Slavic	Albanian	0.27		0.23**	0.27**
Roma	Albanian	0.51		1.82	1.58
tribal area	non-tribal area	0.83	0.54**	1.33**	1.53**
non-agricultural	agricultural	1.83**		1.07	
rural prefectures: Kruja	Tirana North	8.42**	7.49**	2. 08**	
Puka	Tirana North	8.01**	3.57**	1.36	
Shkodra	Tirana North	16.40**	5.76**	1.01	
Zhuri	Tirana North	1.34	1.64	0.75	
Tirana South	Tirana North	0.25	0.27	1.27	
Berati	Tirana North	0.00	0.00	0.92	
Cities: Kruja	Tirana North	5.99**	5.99**	0.74	
Shkodra	Tirana North	16.67**	7.47**	2.66**	
Durrës	Tirana North	4.25	4.87*	2.09*	
Elbasan	Tirana North	3.95**	4.38**	1.97**	
Kavaja	Tirana North	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Tirana	Tirana North	1.84	1.86	0.62	
N		3,948	3,948	3,794	3,794

Source: Kaser et al. 2011.
Note: ** Odds ratio is significant at the 0.01 level.
* Odds ratio is significant at the 0.05 level.

7. Conclusions

The analysis of marriage patterns based on the Albanian census of 1918 reveals a considerable influence of religion on marriage: Christians married later than Muslims and the age gap between spouses was smaller, too. The influence on the age at marriage was much stronger for women than for men, while the influence on the age gap between spouses was in between. Catholic women had a much higher probability for remaining unmarried than Muslim women, while for Orthodox women and men in general no significant difference in behaviour could be found. The difference in urban-rural residence had an effect only on men's age at marriage and on remaining unmarried, but no significant effect on

women. Urban men married later and remained more often unmarried, but also had a larger age difference to their wives as compared to rural men. Literacy increased the age at marriage and the age difference between spouses, but had no significant effect on remaining unmarried. Slavic women married later while Slavic men married earlier and the age gap between them was smaller than for Albanians. Fewer Slavic men remained unmarried while there was no significant effect on Slavic women. Most results were not significant for Roma. In the tribal area men married later and the age difference to their spouses was larger. In this area fewer women but more men remained unmarried. Men in non-agricultural occupations married later and the age difference to their spouses was larger than for men in the agricultural sector. The regional effect was generally important (except for the proportion of unmarried men), because most regional dummies showed significant results. The effects of the different cities were not so important, because the results of about half of them were always insignificant. Age groups were of major importance for the age difference between spouses: the larger the husband is, the larger the age gap to his spouse.

If we want to assess the impact of different factors on marriage patterns, we can conclude that religion had an influence, but that generally other factors had stronger effects. One of the strongest influence for all variables was regional variation between the rural prefectures and the cities. Literacy had an enormous effect on the female age at marriage, while Slavic ethnicity had a similar strong effect on female age at marriage and the proportion of unmarried men. Age was the most important factor for the age difference between spouses. Being Catholic had the strongest effect on the share of unmarried women – this is the only variable where religion was as important as any other factor.

This analysis confirms that Muslims in Albania married earlier than Christians, as stated by Sklar for the Balkans in general (Sklar 1974, 237), Brunnbauer for the Bulgarian Rhodope mountains around 1900 (Brunnbauer 2004, 348-359), and Botev for Bulgaria in general (Botev 1990, 117). The higher ages at marriage for urban Bulgarians can be confirmed for Albanian cities, but the same ages at marriage in cities for Muslims and Christians cannot be confirmed for Albanian cities (Todorova 1993, 40f.). In Albania the proportions of never married people differed by religion, which is in contrast to Bulgaria (Brunnbauer 2004, 356-358). The earlier partial results of the influence of marriage on ages at marriage in Albania could be generally confirmed (Kera 2012, 46f.; Papa-Pandelejmoni 2012, 58f.).

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